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**Former Compton Fire Battalion Chief
Pleads in Arson, Embezzlement Case**

A former Compton fire battalion chief pleaded no contest today to setting a fire and stealing more than \$300,000 worth of city-owned Motorola radio equipment, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Marcel Dione Melanson, 38, pleaded to one count of arson of property and one count of embezzlement by a public officer and admitted an excessive loss allegation before Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge David Horwitz.

Deputy District Attorney Renee Rose of the Arson Unit said Melanson will return for sentencing on May 22. He will be sentenced to three years, four months in state prison and will be ordered to pay full restitution.

Rose said Melanson agreed to pay \$100,000 as an initial payment by May 22, when he surrenders to begin his prison term.

Melanson admitted setting fire to radio equipment owned by the City of Compton. The radios were slated to be used for a newly formed Compton police department, which never materialized. Melanson stole nearly 100 radios, many of which he sold on Ebay.

Melanson admitted setting a fire on Dec. 11, 2011, which prosecutors said was to conceal the theft of the equipment.

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and the Long Beach Fire Department investigated the case.

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About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to seeking justice for victims of crime and enhancing public safety. Last year, the [Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#) prosecuted more than 73,000 felony defendants and 113,000 misdemeanor defendants.